

Title I Instructional Coach Guidelines

Purpose Statement: Instructional Coaching is becoming a commonly used model of professional development particularly in Arizona's Title I LEAs. The purpose of this document is to provide tools, tips and guiding questions that administrators can use when embarking upon a coaching model to increase the likelihood that their identified purposes, goals and desired outcomes will be reached.

Coaching Definition:

A coach can be broadly defined as a person who works collaboratively with a teacher to improve that teacher's practice and content knowledge, with the ultimate goal of affecting student achievement.

(Yopp et.al. *Journal of Staff Development*. Feb. 2011)

Coaching Benefits:

The principles of instructional coaching are grounded in research on effective professional development and professional learning communities. A growing body of research suggests that coaching is a promising element of effective professional development because it is school-based and job-embedded. Effective coaching also:

- Encourages collaborative, reflective practice
- Promotes positive cultural change
- Encourages the use of data analysis to inform practice
- Promotes the implementation of learning and reciprocal accountability
- Supports collective, interconnected leadership across a school system

(Annenberg Institute for School Reform. *Professional Development Strategies that Improve Instruction*.)

Selecting Coaching as a Strategy and Using Title I Support:

When considering the use of a coaching model in your district or school, it is necessary to reflect upon the following questions:

- Has a comprehensive needs assessment been conducted with data pointing to the need to implement a coaching model?
- Is there specific content knowledge that needs to be strengthened?
- Is there a specific instructional model, or set of instructional practices, that teachers need to support and implement?
- Are teachers effective in implementing instructional practices that promote Arizona College and Career Standards with fidelity?

- What commitment do your teachers have to the process?
- Has a specific coaching design and time schedule been identified?
- Have specific goals for the teaching staff, along with expected outcomes, been developed?
- Is there clarity in terms of the coaches role in a schoolwide program where all teachers may be coached, but with a targeted assistance program only TI teachers working with targeted students may be coached using Title I funds?
- Will there be effective support from the school/district leadership?
- Is there a collaborative working relationship with the principal including clear distinction between the coaching processes and the evaluative function of the principal?
- How will the work and accomplishment(s) of instructional coaches be measured/evaluated?

Coaching Qualifications:

Effective coaching embodies what Jim Collins describes as a “compelling combination of personal humility and professional will.” They are affirmative, humble and deeply respectful of classroom teachers, but they are unwilling to rest unless they achieve significant improvement in teaching and learning in their schools.

(Knight, Jim. *The School Administrator*. April 2006)

Commonly recommended qualifications include, at a minimum:

- A valid AZ Standard Teacher Certificate (charter schools are exempt)
- 5 years full-time teaching experience
- Highly qualified teacher and appropriately certified with success in helping low achieving student improve academically
- Pedagogical knowledge- Instructional coaches are always experienced educators with valid teaching certification
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Knowledge in content area
- Knowledge in evidence based practices
- Knowledge of the Instructional Coaching process
- Understanding of adult learning needs and motivation
- Understanding the organizations reform goals and improvement targets
- Knowledge of professional development standards and ability to plan and facilitate professional development

Qualified coaches have essential skills that are demonstrated during the coaching process including trust and relationship building; collaboration and planning;

observing instruction and giving effective feedback; modeling lessons; and using data to make instructional decisions.

Evaluating Coaching:

The quality of the coaching process in terms of the overall impact on teacher performance and student achievement, is an important factor in determining if the coaching process is effective and worth the time and money that is being invested. It is valuable to involve coaches in the process of creating guidelines, standards and tools to be used in the evaluation of instructional coaches. And it is critical that coaches work with both teachers and the school principal to develop indicators of success, specific timelines and benchmarks throughout the school year as a guide to the coaches' work.

(Annenberg Institute for School Reform. *Professional Development Strategies that Improve Instruction*. March 2010)

Coaching needs to be evaluated on several levels:

- What did coaching accomplish?
- Did the coaching program meet its goals?
- What was the impact on teachers? On students?
- What was the benefit? How significant was the benefit? Was it worth the time and money allocated to this program? (Cost-benefit ratio)
- Was this program more or less successful than other forms of professional development?
- How can the evaluation process be designed so that a combination of evaluation methods (surveys, checklist, rubrics, data review, self-assessments) are used thus providing a more accurate assessment?
- Were there any negative outcomes?
- What should be changed?

Coaching Evaluation Resources

Below is a listing of sample coaching instruments from across the country:

- A sample survey from the Alabama Professional Learning Collaborative designed to gather information from staff regarding instructional coaches can be accessed at:
<http://www.alabamapepe.com/specialist/InstructionSpecialistSurveyFaculty.doc>
- Maricopa County Education Service Agency in Arizona developed a Coaching Observation Instrument in 2012. This instrument is the result of a collaborative effort to create a cross-district master educator observation tool to be used as part of a performance-based evaluation system.

http://mcesa.schoolwires.net/cms/lib03/AZ00001882/Centricity/Domain/4/2COI_REIL_Final9-13.pdf

- Clark Pleasant Community Schools in Indiana has an instructional coach evaluation rubric which looks at a number of competencies including Trust Building, Use of Coaching Strategies, Modeling, Co-planning and Data Driven Instruction.

http://cpcsc.k12.in.us/admin/docs/evalres/instructional_coach_rubric.pdf
(Copy to a browser, will not open in Microsoft Word)

- Denver Public Schools has developed a comprehensive rubric, along with indicators, to be used with instructional coaches as a guide toward recognizing strengths and weaknesses.

<http://static.dpsk12.org/gems/hr2009/StandCriteriaRubricsIndFacilitatorInstrCoach.doc>

- The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning has a wide array of resources on instructional coaches, including a toolkit with observation forms. <http://instructionalcoach.org/resources>

- Rockwood School District in Missouri developed an instructional coach formative evaluation and data collection instrument. The instrument covers four domains: planning and preparation, instruction, environment and professionalism.

<http://www.rockwood.k12.mo.us/boardofeducation/policiesandregulations/District%20Forms/Instructional%20Coach%20-%20Evaluation%20Handbook.pdf>

References:

-Annenberg Institute for School Reform. *Professional Development Strategies that Improve Instruction*. (March 2010) <http://annenberginstitute.org/pdf/proflearning.pdf>

-Knight, J. "Instructional Coaching." (April 2006) *The School Administrator*. Number 4, Vol. 63 <http://aasa.org/SchoolAdministratorArticle.aspx?id=9584>

-Knight, J. *Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction*. (2007) Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

-Knight, J. "What Good Coaches Do." (October 2011).) *Educational Leadership*. Vol. 69 #2, pp. 18-22.

-Kopp, D., Burroughs, E., Luebeck, J., Heidema, C., Mitchell, A., Sutton, J. February 2011. "How to be a wise consumer of coaching: Strategies teachers can use to maximize coaching's benefits," (February 2011). *Journal of Staff Development*, 32(1), pp 50-53.